

Assessment 3: What are the main challenges that might be encountered by a newly promoted supervisor in managing a team, and what strategies might they adopt?

When a supervisor is appointed to manage a new team, at a new site, there will be a variety of challenges that the manager will face. It is likely that if it is an existing team, then they will already have processes and methods in place for undertaking their duties. It is essential that the new project supervisor gets to know the team individually, and gains an understanding of the team's dynamics, strengths and weaknesses (O'Hara, 2014). When a supervisor has done this, it will allow them to understand where there are challenging dynamics within the team. Then, where possible, these can be avoided or addressed.

It is important that a new supervisor recognises that their role is to manage the team and the undertaking of excavation at the site, and not to involve themselves in the minutiae of undertaking the excavation (Locock, 2012, 18) and uncovering archaeology. A manager should look at the team they are managing and identify what gaps there are in knowledge and training. They should also look at their own skills and determine what gaps there are in their own knowledge of team management. A training plan for the whole team, including themselves can then be made (Locock, 2012, p. 28).

If the new supervisor has been promoted from within the same team, then this can be a challenging dynamic and the ability to influence the team or gain respect will probably be more difficult than if the new supervisor has arrived from an external position (Gentry, 2022). This will especially be the case if there were other members of the team who applied for the same position that the new supervisor has been appointed to. In this case the manager will need to prove their ability and try to regain the respect of competing applicants.

The management challenges can go upwards as well as downwards. If the supervisor's manager provides their own set of challenges in their management style, then strategies for mitigating any issues can include understanding their priorities, ensure upward communication and informing, anticipating needs and being proactive about it, building trust and offering solutions (Grant, 2024).

New external supervisors will need to learn and navigate the methods and processes used in their new organisation. If they are working for a private company there are likely to be fewer restrictions placed on them than if they are working for a local authority. They may need to make themselves more visible to upper management (Gentry, 2022), or, if the team's positions might be in jeopardy, then avoid this.

One method for a newly appointed supervisor to overcome difficulties could be to have a training buddy, in order to overcome the singular aspect of continued professional development. This should be someone who isn't directly involved with the supervisor's management hierarchy, but should be discrete, sympathetic and committed to the process (Locock, 2012, p. 77).

Involvement with a professional body could also be helpful, and the continued professional development undertaken with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists would give access to specialist groups, such as the Project Management Special Interest Group (ClfA, 2023). This would allow the supervisor to gain mentoring, training and documents to provide support.

Bibliography

ClfA (2024) *Project Management Special Interest Group* | *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*. Available at: <https://www.archaeologists.net/groups/PMSIG> (Last accessed 10 January 2025).

Gant, K. (2024) *How to Manage Up at Work: Your Guide for Success*. Available at: <https://www.betterup.com/en-gb/blog/how-to-manage-up> (Last accessed 10 January 2025).

Gentry, B. (2022) *12 Common Challenges of New Managers* | *CCL*. Available at: <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/first-time-managers-must-conquer-these-challenges/> (Last accessed 10 January 2025).

Locock, M. (2012) *10 simple steps to better archaeological management*. Ammanford: Carreg Ffylfan Press.

O'Hara, C. (2014) *What new team leaders should do first*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2014/09/what-new-team-leaders-should-do-first> (Last accessed 10 January 2025).